

Office of National Drug Control Policy

Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse

Fresno, California

Profile of Drug Indicators

July 2000



ONDCP Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse staff compiled this profile by using the most recent data available from open sources. The data presented are as accurate as the sources from which they were drawn. The information contained in this profile should not be used to rank or compare States or jurisdictions, due to differences in data collection and reporting methods.

Fresno

The following profile contains information on demographics, political figures, programs, crime, drug use, drug trafficking, and enforcement statistics.

Demographics¹

- The following statistics are for Fresno County, California.
- Population: 667,490 (1990 Census), 763,069 (1999 estimate)
- Race/Ethnicity: 83.1% White, 5.2% Black, 1.3% American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut, 10.4% Asian or Pacific Islander, 41.2% Hispanic origin (may be of any race)
- Percent of persons below the poverty level: 25.2% (1995)

Politics²

- Mayor: Jim Patterson
- City Manager: Jeffrey Reid
- Chief of Police: Ed Winchester
- Fresno County Sheriff: Richard Pierce

Programs/Initiatives

- The Central Valley HIDTA was designated in 1999 and includes Sacramento, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, Fresno, Tulare, Kings, and Kern Counties. The HIDTA is headquartered in Fresno and the Fresno Police Department participates in the program.
Fresno Methamphetamine Task Force: This initiative will focus on major methamphetamine manufacturing and distribution organizations, precursor chemical suppliers, pseudoephedrine tablet distribution organizations operating in Fresno, Madera, and into other areas of the county. The intent of these investigations will be concentrated on the dismantling cell and or entire organizations leading to the arrest and prosecution of key members of the organization. The main emphasis of the Task Force is precursor chemicals, methamphetamine manufacturing, and distribution.³
- Project D.A.R.E is a cooperative effort of the Fresno Police Department and the Fresno Unified School District. The program is taught in West Fresno, Central, and Clovis Unified schools located within the city limits. The program content for DARE is organized into seventeen 45 to 60 minute lessons to be taught by a police officer with suggested extended activities to be integrated into the instruction by a classroom teacher. A specially trained officer is assigned to the school one day a week for one semester to conduct weekly lessons in grades 5 or 6.⁴
- The Fresno Weed and Seed site works in collaboration with the New United Way, the Fresno Police Department, Assistant US Attorney's Office, the Multi Agency Gang Enforcement Consortium MAGEC, and the Lane Neighborhood Association. The target area for the Weed and Seed program is the Lane area, which falls within the southeast corner of the City of Fresno. Southeast Fresno is approximately twenty-four square miles with a total population of 115,155. The percentage of those living in poverty in Southeast Fresno is as high as 48% in some sections with five other census tracts over 30%. The Fresno Police Department estimates that at least 75% of murders committed in the target area were gang related, with over half committed by youth

between the ages of 14 to 19 years old. Fresno Weed and Seed programs include: Big Brothers/Big Sisters, the Future Positive Program that teaches children about positive choices in life, and a new Geographic Information Survey (GIS) has been developed to map out the impact of services and issues specifically related to the Operation Weed and Seed target area.⁵

Crime and Drug-Related Crime

- The Crime Index Total in Fresno has dropped from 32,075 in 1998 to 28,833 in 1999.⁶

Offenses Known to Fresno Police, 1998-1999

Offense	1998	1999
Murder	36	26
Forcible Rape	175	160
Robbery	1,394	1,268
Aggravated Assault	2,649	2,554
Burglary	5,202	4,419
Larceny-Theft	16,948	15,763
Motor Vehicle Theft	5,671	4,643
Arson	839	744
Crime Index Total	32,075	28,833

- Crimes continued to decrease in Fresno during the first quarter of 2000. Violent crime was down 15% from the first quarter of 1999 to the first quarter of 2000.⁷

Number of Offenses Known to Fresno Police by Quarters*, 1999-2000

Offense	1st Quarter 1999	1st Quarter 2000	Percent Change
Violent Crime Index	988	840	-15%
Homicide	8	3	-62.5
Rape	28	25	-10.7
Robbery	314	303	-3.5
Assaults	638	509	-20.2
Property Crime Index	6,696	5,250	-21.6
Burglary	1,182	1,006	-14.9
Larceny	4,130	2,930	-29.1
Vehicle Theft	1,239	1,248	+7
Arsons	145	66	-54.5

* Quarter = January, February, and March.

Drugs⁸

- The nine counties of the Central Valley, California HIDTA area comprise a major agricultural center for the nation. Approximately four million residents populate the region although the population swells seasonally as the need for agricultural migrant labor fluctuates. Two international airports and hundreds of private airstrips service the residents of the Central Valley. The Central Valley also contains several major

interstate highways including Interstate 5 and Highway 99 which are the traffickers' favored routes of transportation for moving methamphetamine, heroin, and cocaine from Mexico and the Central Valley to Northern California and the Pacific Northwest. Additionally, Interstate 80 runs east from San Francisco directly through Sacramento before traversing the length of the United States through the Rocky Mountains and Midwestern States and provides a major pipeline for the transportation of controlled substances headed to the Midwest and Eastern United States. The Central Valley is also home to rail, bus, cargo, and shipping port facilities. The Central Valley continues to be a primary manufacturing, transshipment, distribution, and consumption area for illegal narcotics, and for methamphetamine in particular. Within the last several years the area has experienced a dramatic increase in the number and scale of clandestine methamphetamine manufacturing labs operating within the region. These labs, most of which are operated by multi-drug trafficking organizations based in Mexico, now infest the Central Valley. These organizations tend to situate their labs and so called "super-labs" in the Central Valley due to its proximity to the State's principal precursor chemical supply companies and its major interstate highways. These large-scale, relatively sophisticated labs are set up long in advance of use, are well concealed, often heavily guarded, and can produce from 20 to 200 pounds of high purity methamphetamine per cooking cycle.

Sources

¹ U.S. Census Bureau Web site: <http://www.census.gov>

² City of Fresno Web site: <http://www.ci.fresno.ca.us/>

³ ONDCP Web site, HIDTA Section: <http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/enforce/hidta.html>

⁴ City of Fresno Police Department Web Site: <http://www.ci.fresno.ca.us/fpd/index.html#top>

⁵ Weed and Seed Program Web site: <http://www.weedseed.org>

⁶ Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Preliminary Annual Uniform Crime Report, 1999*, May 2000

⁷ City of Fresno Police Department Media Release, *First Quarter of 2000 Crime Statistics Show Continued Declines*, June 2000

⁸ ONDCP Web site, HIDTA Section: <http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/enforce/hidta.html>

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